Analysis of Student Learning Data

PVAAS

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On September 3, 2009, the data set I chose to review and drill down is PVAAS (PA Value-Added Assessment System). This non-public data set measures PSSA tests, improvement measures such as Safe Harbor and shows progress and growth measurement. I chose this data set because I thought it was valuable information to see how a school or class progressed throughout a year. PVAAS is not another test and is not being used for teacher-level accountability in Pennsylvania.

**Types of Assessment**

The assessment process that this data set represents is summative and diagnostic.

PVAAS requires a login, which I had to acquire approval from my executive director and then request a username and password from EVAAS\_support@sas.com.

I chose Riverside Beaver County School District to analyze. AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) measures school performance based on the PSSA test and Riverside made AYP on all accounts.

As I drilled down, the 2009 growth standards for the district in math showed grades 6 and 8 having a gain equal or greater than the standard. The other grades through 8 showed either one or two standards less. In addition, the high school had a district effect of 45.2, which was above the state average. Overall in 2009 the district had a NCE gain of 1.5 in comparison to the state average of -0.3. As I continue to drill down to view a Performance Diagnostic Report of the district’s 7th Grade PSSA Math, it shows the Below Basic students stayed on the green line, which is considered sufficient. All other categories of basic, proficient and advanced all fell below the base green line therefore not showing growth.

As a district, in Reading grades 4-8, Riverside made their target for overall achievement and showed a standard growth of 1.9 versus the state average of -0.5. Grades 4, 6 and 8 showed a greater than growth standard; however, grades 5 and 7 showed below the growth standard by 2 standard errors or less. The Performance Diagnostic Report for 7th Grade PSSA Reading surprised me. Again even though 7th grade met their target, a couple of the proficiency levels still fell below in the growth area. This time I drilled down further in the Advanced subgroup and found that 18 out of 62 students fell into a lower proficiency level. Similar to the math reports, I can drill down to a student and get the student average verses school and if applicable the district.

**Overall vs subgroups**

Even though Riverside made AYP on all accounts across the board, when looking at their performance on the Diagnostic report the subgroups did not show a lot of growth. For example the subgroups of Basic, Proficient and Advanced for 7th Grade PSSA Math all fell below the baseline which means there was no growth and in some cases went backwards. Another subgroup I analyzed is the Economically Disadvantaged group in 7th Grade PSSA Math, which again on all accounts fell below and showed on the average no growth. If I drill down even further, I can look at individual students and see in the Proficient group that only 9 stayed at the proficient level, 5 fell into the Basic category and 3 moved up to Advanced. At this point I can click on a particular student that scored basic this time and see how the student compares with the district. The year between 6th and 7th grade the student fell significantly below the school average. In addition, a chart will list scores and proficiency levels from 2005 until 2009. Similar results were evident for 7th Grade PSSA Reading. Even though they met their overall target, three out of the 4 proficiency level subgroups showed a decrease in growth. In the subgroup of Economically Disadvantaged, two of the groups went from one year of decrease growth to a 2009 gain in growth.

**Focal Areas to Inform a School Leader**

The PVAAS data informs the school leader about standards-aligned system, supervision and evaluation, professional development and communication.

**Who should have Access to the Data?**

I believe administrators, reading specialists, math and reading coaches and any other intervention resource people should have access to the data. The PVAAS allows resource personnel to dig deeper into analysis and in turn can use this data for intervention or communication with teachers. PVAAS has numerous reporting features in which could be distributed to applicable parties. After interviewing the IU Curriculum Director, this is the procedure that our organization uses. The administrators are taught how to read and analyze the data; moreover, reports are generated if requested.

**Reflection**

Riverside has made AYP and met their targets in both reading and math. However, the data set I reviewed clearly reflects several subgroups in math and reading falling below the ideal line and did not always display a one-year growth. In many cases, they fell below the green standard line and did not see a growth. What does a school begin to look at? If it is a decrease from one grade to another, many times it can be the age group. However, if the growth is continually going down, instruction and curriculum need to be evaluated.

Even though currently Riverside is doing quite well when looking at the current overall state average; however, every school should be looking at a desired state of not only meeting the state standard achievement levels but also showing continual growth.

There are two PVAAS methodologies that will help to achieve continual growth. The Looking Back/Evaluation will allow administrators and other resource personnel to look at Value-added Growth reports for cohorts of students. Just as important the Looking Forward/Planning will utilize the PVAAS Projection Reports for individual students and cohorts of students. Another feature I learned about PVAAS is that you can create your own group. For example, if you have at least 15 students using Compass Learning and you want to place them in a special Compass Learning group, you can compare and see the growth before and after they used Compass Learning or compare with students not using Compass Learning. This is a perfect tool to justify spending funds on programs such as Compass Learning.

In addition, administrators can create scatter plots using the Auto Filter command in Excel to show achievement vs growth data. There are four quadrants: High Achievement,-Positive Growth, Low Achievement-Positive Growth, High Achievement-Negative Growth and Low Achievement-Negative Growth. As a district the ultimate goal should be High Achievement-Positive Growth and the Low Achievement-Positive Growth would be next in line; both are showing a positive growth.

I analyzed several of the data sets and a couple features I really liked in the AYP site was that you could generate student reports to go home to the parents and a new feature of a district interactive map. The map displays markers showing the school, address, and their status such as made AYP, Making Progress, Warning, or Corrective Action. In addition, a school report can be viewed by clicking on a link.

I had to review one in depth; therefore, PVAAS was my number one choice because it allows me to drill down to a deeper state and analyze not only my scores but also my growth. From this data, an administrator can analyze the Looking Back Evaluation and the Looking Forward and Planning.